

## BBSRC sLOLA CALL

### GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

#### CALL SCOPE

Applicants should refer to the sLoLa call webpage for details of the call scope, including scientific focus, requirements, exclusions and available resources.

<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/grants/lola/>

#### APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS - SUMMARY

Stage	Assessment
Call registration	<p>The aim of the call registration is to ensure outlines are appropriately targeted to this call, to provide an early indication of the level of demand and to allow institutional-level demand moderation steps to be taken if necessary.</p> <p>Non-peer review feedback will be supplied by BBSRC Office regarding the suitability of the project for the call.</p>
Outline stage	<p>Outline proposals will be assessed by the Strategic LoLa Committee (SLC).</p> <p>The SLC will invite submission of full proposals for outlines that have the potential to be highly competitive at the full stage.</p>
Full stage	<p>Full proposals will be assessed in two phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive Mode Committees</li> </ul> <p>External peer review and assessment will be undertaken by the Responsive Mode Committees. High scoring proposals will be shortlisted for further consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic LoLa Committee</li> </ul> <p>The SLC will receive the evaluation of shortlisted proposals from the Responsive Mode Committees.</p> <p>The SLC will conduct interviews with shortlisted applicants to assess further aspects of the sLoLa assessment criteria and consider the strategic case for investment.</p> <p>The SLC will integrate all the assessment information and formulate a final ranked list with recommendations to BBSRC.</p>

## APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS – OUTLINE STAGE

The outline stage is mandatory and **only open to applicants who have registered for the call**, subject to Office feedback on fit to scope and any institutional-level demand management steps that have been imposed (this will only be implemented if essential to control demand).

### How to apply

Outline proposals must be submitted through the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System by **4pm 12 July 2018**, using the following information:

1. Log in the Joint Electronic System (Je-S)
2. Select Council: BBSRC
3. Select Document Type: Outline proposal
4. Select Scheme: Standard Outlines
5. Select Call/Type/Mode: 2018 Strategic LoLa Outlines
6. Select 'Create Document' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the form.

In addition to the Je-S proposal form, the only attachment that should be provided is the Case for Support. No other attachments (e.g. covering letter, letters of support) will be accepted.

### Case for support (outline stage)

The Case for Support must be structured using the headings below and must not exceed six pages of A4. At a minimum, font size 11 in Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size must be used with a minimum of single line and standard character spacing. Page margins should be no less than 2cm.

The following four headings (highlighted in bold below) should be used:

#### **Section 1: Track record** (two pages recommended)

- The track record of the PI and Co-Is, demonstrating significant research achievements relevant to (and set in the context of) the proposed sLoLa project and broader impacts.
- Evidence of experience in undertaking programmes of successful research. This would be expected to include any engagement in previous collaborative projects by the investigators.
- The leadership qualities and track record of the Principal Investigator, demonstrating capability to lead the project, including any relevant professional development.
- The contribution to the project of each named co-Investigator should be included in the form of a succinct personal statement. This must include a clear time commitment for each Co-I.

#### **Section 2: Strategic Case** (one page recommended)

- The significance and importance of the proposed research, including how the sLoLa will enhance the international position of UK bioscience in the research area.
- How the research program relates to the priorities of the applicants' institution(s).
- How the research program will have an impact on the broader health and vitality of the UK bioscience. Where applicable, this might include the potential for longer term legacy and sustainability, impacts on skills development, relevance to BBSRC? priority areas, and potential longer term economic or social impacts.

### **Section 3: Statement of added value** (one page recommended)

- Justify the need for sLoLa funding, describing the added value of funding through this mechanism. Describe how the work proposed is a fully integrated program of work that must be tackled via a single, coherent programme of coordinated activity and could not be supported through other funding routes (e.g. several smaller Responsive Mode awards).
- Outline how the proposed research complements and does not overlap with other research funded in this area nationally and internationally, including BBSRC's research portfolio. For information on BBSRC's portfolio, please see Gateway to Research and downloads on the call webpage.

### **Section 4: Science Case** (two pages recommended)

- Identify the overall aims of the proposed sLoLa research programme, set in the context the call's frontier bioscience scope, current knowledge, and the leading edge within the research domain(s).
- The high-level objectives for the planned sLoLa must be included (typically 3-5 bullets) with an explanation of how these will be tackled. If a full proposal is invited, it is expected that the high-level objectives will appear unchanged unless feedback from the outline assessment process indicates otherwise.
- Highlight features which are particularly original or unique. Explain how the research programme is an ambitious, transformative approach that will result in a step change in knowledge that will have a major impact on the research area.

### **Resources**

The proposal needs to include indicative costs at the outline stage and the Je-S form should include a summary of the resources requested; a total for indicative costs should be provided within the 'directly incurred costs' section of the Je-S form.. **Detailed justification of the resources requested is not required at the outline stage.**

### **Assessment process: outline stage**

Outline proposals will be assessed by the SLC.

The purpose of the outline stage is not to conduct a detailed scientific evaluation but to assess the extent to which the proposal addresses the purpose, scope and eligibility requirements of the sLoLa call. Please refer to the outline assessment criteria in **Annex 1**.

Based on their assessment, the SLC will decide which applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Feedback from the SLC will be provided to those applicants who are invited to make a full proposal and may include comments on:

- essential information that should be part of a full proposal
- any parts of the outline that should not be included in a full proposal
- the framing of the research objectives
- any concerns about the management of the project
- any suggested modifications to the scale or timescales of the project
- any additional work or collaborations not outlined in the application, where they are deemed to be essential to the success of the project, or concerns as to the composition of the project team
- any other advice required

Feedback will be provided on request for unsuccessful applicants.

## APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS – FULL STAGE

The full application is open to proposals invited by the SLC following the outline assessment.

### How to apply (invited full proposals)

Full proposals must be submitted on a single Je-S proposal form, even if they are multi-institutional bids. The award will be made to the lead institution, which will be responsible for the management of the award.

Applicants should also refer to the [Je-S help](#) text and [BBSRC Grants Guide](#), in addition to this call guidance, when preparing a proposal.

Proposals must be submitted through the Je-S System by **16 January 2019 (TBC)**, using the following information:

1. **Log in** the Joint Electronic System (Je-S)
2. Select **Council:** BBSRC
3. Select **Document Type:** Standard Proposal
4. Select **Scheme:** TBC
5. Select **Call/Type/Mode:** TBC
6. Click **Create Document**

### Overview of submission documents

The following documentation is required:

Document	Description	Page limit
<a href="#">Case for Support</a>	The overall maximum page length for the combined Case for Support is 14 pages. It must be self-	Maximum 14 pages

	contained - external links are not permitted. See detailed information below for Case for Support breakdown.	
Justification of Resources	A narrative description of the resources required for the project.	<p>Maximum 2 pages</p> <p>All resources requested (directly incurred, directly allocated and exceptions, including PI and Co-I time) must be fully justified. Items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the Research Organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).</p> <p>Please see the <a href="#">Je-S guidance</a> for further details.</p>
Pathways to Impact	<p>Must be specific to the project and contain timelines and objectives. Further information is available at <a href="https://www.ukri.org/innovation/excellence-with-impact/">https://www.ukri.org/innovation/excellence-with-impact/</a></p>	Maximum 2 pages
CVs	Required for all named applicants and named research staff only. CVs are not required for named technicians.	Maximum 2 pages per investigator and named researcher, combined into a single PDF
Work Plan	A diagrammatic work plan and supporting narrative that relates to the management strategy, identifying appropriate time points and deliverables for each objective. A Gantt chart is recommended.	Maximum 2 pages

Data Management Plan	<a href="http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/about/policies-standards/data-sharing-policy/">http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/about/policies-standards/data-sharing-policy/</a>	Maximum 2 pages
Justification of Animal Usage (if applicable)	Signed animal usage declaration, Use of rodents overseas form  Only required for overseas animal usage.  <a href="https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/apply/application-guidance/animal-use-in-research/">https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/apply/application-guidance/animal-use-in-research/</a>	Variable
Letters of support	Only directly relevant Letters of Support should be submitted. These include letters from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Department</li> <li>• Collaborators</li> <li>• Project Partners</li> </ul> Other letters of support are not permitted.	Combined into a single PDF

### Case for Support

The Case for Support should build on the information provided at the outline stage and any feedback but should be a self-contained document. **The outline proposal will not be made available to external reviewers or the Responsive Mode Committees.**

The Case for Support must be a single document that includes the following information:

#### Section 1: Track record (two pages recommended)

- The track record of the PI and Co-Is, demonstrating significant research achievements relevant to (and set in the context of) the proposed sLoLa project and broader impacts.
- Evidence of experience in undertaking programmes of successful research. This would be expected to include any engagement in previous collaborative projects by the investigators.
- The leadership qualities and track record of the PI, demonstrating capability to lead the project, including any relevant professional development. Where relevant, their ability to mentor and support the development of Early Career Researchers.
- The contribution to the project of each named Co-I. This must include a clear time commitment for each Co-I.

#### Section 2: Strategic Case (one page recommended)

- The significance and importance of the proposed research, including how the sLoLa will enhance the international position of UK bioscience in the research area.
- How the research program relates to the priorities of the applicants' institution(s).
- How the research program will have an impact on the broader health and vitality of the UK bioscience. Where applicable, this might include the potential for longer term legacy and sustainability, impacts on skills development, relevance to BBSRC (?) priority areas, and potential longer term economic or social impacts.

### **Section 3: Statement of added value (one page recommended)**

- Justify the need for sLoLa funding, describing the added value of funding through this mechanism. Describe how the work proposed is a fully integrated program of work that must be tackled via a single, coherent programme of coordinated activity and could not be supported through other funding routes (e.g. several smaller Responsive Mode awards).
- Outline how the proposed research complements and does not overlap with other research funded in this area nationally and internationally, including BBSRC's research portfolio. For information on BBSRC's portfolio, please see Gateway to Research and downloads on the sLola call webpage.

### **Section 4: Management strategy (one page recommended)**

- The management approach should be appropriate to the nature and scale of the programme.
- Describe how the project will be managed to ensure effective working of the investigators and successful delivery of the planned outcomes.
- Provide details about the governance, advisory and management structure, details of the approach to project and risk management, and the monitoring strategy for the proposed programme.
- An independent advisory board is advised for large-scale programmes.

### **Section 5: Science Case (up to nine pages recommended)**

#### **Background**

- Introduce the topic of research and explain its academic and wider context.
- Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of past and current work in the subject area both in the UK and abroad.
- Provide a summary of the results and conclusions of your recent work in the research area(s) relevant to the proposal.

#### **Programme and methodology**

- Identify the overall aims of the proposed sLoLa research programme, set in the context the call's frontier bioscience scope, current knowledge, and the leading edge within the research domain(s).
- Provide the individual measurable objectives for the planned sLoLa and explain how these will be tackled. This should include a detailed description and justification for the methods and approaches to be employed.
- Describe the programme of work, indicating the research to be undertaken and the milestones that can be used to measure its progress. The detail should be sufficient to indicate the programme of work for each member of the research team.
- Identify any potential risks within the research programme and strategies to mitigate these risks (e.g. alternative approaches).
- Identify any facilities or resources you will need to access.
- Explain why the proposed project is of sufficient timeliness and novelty to warrant consideration for funding. Highlight features which are particularly original or unique. sLoLa proposals are expected to be ambitious and potentially transformative, resulting in a step change in knowledge that will have a major impact on the research area.

### **Assessment process: full stage**

Proposals will be assessed by external peer reviewers and applicants will be invited to respond in writing to the reviewers' comments. Proposals will then be assessed by the relevant Research Committee.

Applications that are scored highly (expected to be those rated within the Excellent and Exceptional scoring range, subject to volume management requirements) will be further assessed by the Strategic LoLa Committee (SLC). The SLC will interview the research team and assess against the criteria set out below. A report of the assessment made by the Research Committee will also be made available to the SLC, for it to take into account in its decision-making. The SLC will make recommendations to BBSRC, which will make the final funding decision.

The Research Committees and SLC will use the criteria and scoring definitions in Annex 1.

Interviews are expected to be held over two days in June 2019 (applicants will be advised to hold these dates once they are known).

### **Conditions of award**

Awards will be made under standard [UKRI Research Grant Terms and Conditions](#) to the lead organisation, which will be responsible for the management of the award. The following additional conditions will also apply:



- **Collaboration Agreements** - Before a sLoLa grant can start, there must be a collaboration agreement in place between the institutions involved. This is in addition to any agreement with industrial collaborators involved in the programme.

## Reporting and Monitoring

As a condition of a sLoLa award, in addition to standard reporting requirements, the PI must complete an interim report during the third year of the grant. A report template will be provided. Continuation of funding for the full period of the grant depends on the assessment of this interim report.

We expect to allocate a named office liaison/monitoring officer who will work provide a primary point of Office contact for the PI, monitor progress of the programme and provide appropriate guidance in relation to key issues arising during the course of the grant.

## ANNEX 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SCORING DEFINITIONS

### Assessment criteria

Applications to the sLoLa scheme will be assessed with reference to the scope of call and against the following assessment criteria:

#### Research excellence

The project should fully address the scientific scope of the call and meet the highest current international standards in its area of research. The project should have a coherent focus on addressing a significant research challenge employing ambitious, creative and innovative approaches. Justification should be provided regarding how the project will lead to a distinctive and significant advancement with regard to both current state of knowledge and ongoing research efforts within the field.

#### Importance and transformative potential

The scientific significance and importance of the proposed research should be clearly articulated. This should include how establishing or enhancing a unique, world leading research activity will ensure international competitiveness of UK bioscience. Proposals should also address how the research program will have significant impact on the broader health and vitality of UK bioscience and consider the potential for longer term legacy and sustainability, impact on capability, and economic and social impact.

#### Added value of funding via sLoLa grant

The need for longer and larger-scale funding through the sLoLa programme must be articulated clearly, with the benefit and added value of supporting a coherent programme of inter-related objectives and other research activities rather than individual project grants clearly demonstrated.

Proposals should include consideration of how the proposed research programme fits with and complements other active UK research in the area or related areas, including the relationship to BBSRC's portfolio of investments and overall strategy.

#### Ability to deliver and leadership quality

The work should be undertaken by a world-class research team comprising the full breadth of skills and expertise needed to achieve the expected outcomes.

Projects must demonstrate that they have the appropriate leadership expertise and experience to deliver the complexity and scale of work proposed. This includes overall scientific leadership to maintain the focus and momentum of the project, as well as the skills required to ensure the successful functioning of the team of individuals involved – this may include relevant professional development indicators (e.g. in leadership/project management)

#### Management strategy

The proposal must demonstrate that a robust strategy is in place to manage the award, the team and the research outputs, including information about governance and advisory structures, risk management, monitoring strategy, and project management.

## Resources

The resources requested should be fully justified and appropriate relative to the anticipated project outcomes.

## Use of the assessment criteria

At each assessment stage of the call, the assessment criteria will be used as follows:

Criteria	Call registration	Outline stage	Full stage: Research Committees	Full stage: sLoLa Committee (including interviews)
Research excellence	N <sup>A</sup>	Y <sup>B</sup>	Y	Y <sup>D</sup>
Importance and transformative potential	N	Y	Y	Y <sup>D</sup>
Added value of funding via sLoLa grant	N	Y	N	Y
Ability to deliver and leadership quality	N <sup>A</sup>	Y	Y <sup>C</sup>	Y <sup>D</sup>
Management strategy	N	N	N	Y
Resources	N	N	Y	Y <sup>D</sup>

<sup>A</sup> Feedback may be provided at call registration regarding fit to call scope and whether teams possess a suitable level of critical mass (e.g. evidence of prior funding and experience running large/complex projects)

<sup>B</sup> Fit of the proposal to the frontier bioscience scope of the call will form part of the outline assessment but a detailed scientific assessment will not be made.

<sup>C</sup> Research Committees and reviewers will assess whether the applicants have the skills and expertise needed to deliver the program of work. Leadership will be assessed at interview.

<sup>D</sup> The SLC will be provided with a report summarising the assessment made by the Research Committees and may use this to identify questions for the interview stage.

In addition, at full stage the Research Committees will also assess the following:

## Pathways to Impact

The proposal must demonstrate that an appropriate strategy is in place to ensure maximum impact of the research is realised. Routes to achieving a broad range of potential impacts should be fully explored with specific activities, timelines, deliverables and measures of success identified. Details of this strategy should be contained in the Pathways to Impact document.

### Data management plan

Research proposals are expected to comply with BBSRC's data sharing policy and all proposals must include a data management plan. For the BBSRC policy please see the statement at [www.bbsrc.ac.uk/about/policies/position/policy/data-sharing-policy/](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/about/policies/position/policy/data-sharing-policy/).

### Ethics and Animal usage

Applications proposing to use animals must abide by the guidance on Animal Use detailed in the BBSRC Grants Guide at <https://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/documents/grants-guide/>.

## SCORING DEFINITIONS

### Outline stage

- Proposals will not be ranked. Proposals will be scored against each of the assessment criteria and proposals must score an average of B against the criteria in order to be considered for progression to the full stage. Demand management may dictate that a higher scoring threshold is imposed. Proposals scoring D against any criterion will not be invited to progress to the full proposal stage.

If necessary, to manage demand and achieve a balanced portfolio of applications at the full stage, proposals that score highly against each of the four criteria may be further sub-categorised.

Criterion	Quality description	Score
<b>1. Research excellence (fit to scope of the call)</b>  <b>2. Importance and transformative potential</b>  <b>3. Added value of funding via sLoLa grant</b>  <b>4. Ability to deliver and leadership quality</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>  - Completely meets all assessment criteria.	A
	<b>Excellent</b>  - Completely meets most assessment criteria and substantially meets all of them.	B
	<b>Very Good</b>  - Substantially meets all	C

	assessment criteria.	
	<p><b>Good or Below</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does not substantially meet one or more assessment criteria.</li> </ul>	D

**Full stage: Research Committees**

Proposals will not be ranked. Research Committees will propose an overall integer score based on the standard BBSRC [scoring framework for reviewers](#). It is anticipated that only proposals rated 'exceptional' or 'excellent' at this stage will be taken forward for consideration by the SLC, subject to volume management requirements.

**Full stage: Strategic LoLa Committee**

Proposals will be ranked using the standard BBSRC scoring framework for reviewers.